Mewu

631 About one kilometer down the valley from this monastery city, a
443 small market town arose, inhabited mainly by Mohammedans. Nine
years ago the Chinese government made this the capital of the dis-
241 trict of Hsia-ho. Li An-che 5) gives a detailed description of Labrang.
231 /7/ The Tibetans who live around Labrang are farmers. They grow
Tibetan barley in the Hsia-ho Valley and its lateral valleys. If con-
ditions are favorable, they also plant some wheat, as well as oats,
peas, broad beans, rape and flax. They also raise yaks, sheep, goats,
horses and pigs.

133 Not far south of Labrang the region of the high Tibetan steppe
begins. Its southern boundary toward Hsik'ang and Szechuan is
formed by the mighty Min-shan, a portion of the K'un-lun system.
West of Labrang are the highlands of the Ch'inghai Province (Kokonor).

133 Above 3,000 meters vegetation gradually comes to an end, not,
241 however, peasant settlements. Even in the treeless, flat, trough-
231 shaped high valleys between 3,000 and 3,500 meters there are every-
361 where small villages of sedentary Tibetans. Here they grow Tibetan
barley and oats, often the two crops mixed, as well as rape. With
increasing altitude, cultivation gradually grows less, and from about
3,500 meters upward we find grassland inhabited only by stock
farmers. (1)

1. Cf. Ekvall 4), page 29.

177 Although the Tibetans who live here are under Chinese adminis-
tration, they are nevertheless very independent of the Chinese, and
are not very much influenced by Chinese culture. They are divided
into individual tribes, one of which (the Mewu-Fantzu) we shall
describe more closely in the following account.

131 The territory of the Mewu-Fantzu lies south of the large lamasery
of He-tso (2) and east of the "old" city of T'ao-chou. The tribe

2. Tafel 2) Vol. II gives a good illustration of the He-tso
monastery.

of the Mewu-Fantzu consists of sedentary as well as nomadic
Tibetans. /8/

123 After I had lived in Labrang and He-tso for some time, I visited
two monasteries belonging to the Mewu tribe: the old and the new
Mewu monasteries (Mewu-chiu-szu and Mewu-hsin-szu). Then I
pitched my tent 18 or 20 kilometers south of the latter monastery
in a shallow valley of about 3,950 meters elevation. On the slope

Mewu

of this valley trough there stood 23 black Tibetan tents in a long row. /23 I had good introductions from the new Mewu monastery, as well as a Chinese interpreter who had lived many years as a trader among these Tibetans, so that I soon gained somewhat closer contact with the inhabitants of these tents. (3)

3. For the place of these traders in the social life of the Tibetan nomads, see Ekvall 4), page 48ff.

Anthropologically the Mewu-Fantzu are by no means a uniform /42 type. On the contrary, one is struck by the diversity of types. (1)

1. In this connection, compare the rich selection of illustrations of ethnic types in Hermanns 3). According to Ekvall 4), page 9, the Fantzu of this region have "all characteristics of a mongrel physical type."

The men are tall to medium-height, measuring about 160 to 180 centimeters; the women are on the average about 20 centimeters shorter. The skin of the exposed parts of their bodies is dark brown, their hair is deep black. Their beard and arm-pit hair is sparse. They do not always have pronounced Mongoloid lids. Some of these Tibetans with their relatively long faces, slightly slanting eyes, somewhat prominent cheek bones and long, flat to concave noses, cannot be distinguished from typical North Chinese. Others, with rounder, flatter faces, more prominent cheek bones, concave noses and slanting eyes with very pronounced Mongoloid folds, look more like Mongolians. Still other types with squarer faces, prominent cheek bones and more prominent, rather narrow upper jaws, sometimes remind one of a Japanese type. However, one also sees types that resemble more the Turkish inhabitants of Sinkiang or even Europeans, more often with straight noses (especially in the types /9/ resembling Europeans), less prominent cheek bones, straight eyes with eyebrows slanting downward at the outer edge, without the Mongoloid fold. By contrast there are, however, also types which occur more often farther south in Hsik'ang, according to my observation, who have very prominent aquiline noses and high cheek bones and remind one of the North American Indian type with their aquiline noses. There are others with narrow faces, delicate aquiline noses and graceful bodies, resembling East Indians and gypsies. All this simply shows that these Fantzu are not a uniform race, and that there must have been a great deal of miscegenation.

124 judgment. In any case, he had had no particularly bad experiences during all the years of his contact with the Fantzu, although this happens very often to Chinese because they find it hard to suppress a certain conceit toward peoples of other cultures.

888 My interpreter described the Mewu-Fantzu as generally sincere,
181 courteous and hospitable. They do not get angry very easily; they
577 are faithful in friendship and are very willing to help each other, but being a Chinese, my interpreter was very scornful of their lack of piety toward their parents. It can happen that an adult son refuses to take his parents into his tent, which is why one sometimes sees old people begging at the temples or burial places. Even wealthy people sometimes treat their parents badly. The Fantzu do not often lie, nor do they incline to boasting; on the contrary, they try to belittle their property, and they put little value on "face." Even wealthy people wear dirty clothes, and sometimes even beg. They do not forget insults. In business the Fantzu are less reliable than the Chinese. They often do not keep their promises, and sometimes they forget to pay.

683 The most common crimes are: theft, plunder, the infliction of
754 bodily injuries, and - in the opinion of the Fantzu themselves - black magic.

671 Common law, not written down, is the law of the Fantzu. The
692 'ou-mu, to whom all the more serious legal cases are presented, decides according to his judgment, usually with the approval of the heads of the ts'aowa groups.

685 According to my interpreter, the Fantzu do not have a tendency to theft, at any rate they do not rob each other. /80/ If they accept a stranger in their midst, (1) they do not steal from him or rob

1. as in the case of the author who was recommended to the Mewu Lamasery by the Labrang Lamasery.

him, especially not when he is a guest in a tent or house.

● [123] Inconsistent though it seemed, my interpreter was always very
685 careful about guarding my belongings which were, as far as possible, stored in the tent in such a way that they could not be easily got at from the outside. An American missionary assured me that this precaution was justified, for he had lived a great deal among the Fantzu and had often been robbed. Nevertheless, my interpreter's insistence that the Fantzu do not tend to steal is only an apparent contradiction. Wherever primitive ideas of justice prevail, stealing from strangers is probably judged on a different moral basis than